



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Newcomers High School

High School 555

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Queens
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Information about the school

Newcomers High School's specific mission is to service a population of 100% English language learners with academic assistance and social services. All students have recently arrived in this country with little or no English language abilities. It shares space with another high school.

The school services students in grades 9 through 12. Its 1,097 students are 59% Hispanic, 32% Asian, 7% White and 2% Black. Spanish and Chinese are the main languages spoken but overall there is a wide range of languages. There are no special education students at the school. The school's specialized status means that it does not have to have systems in place to service the needs of special education students. About 72% of the students are Title 1 eligible, significantly higher than City and similar schools. Attendance at the school is 92%, much higher than similar and City schools.

What the school does well

- The principal, supported by a strong cabinet, provides inspirational and effective leadership.
- The school has high graduation rates and high rates of students accepted into college.
- Interventions are very effective, comprehensive in scope and directed at the needs of English language learners.
- Systems for consistently gathering data and monitoring the progress of groups and individual students are exemplary.
- The leaders of the school hold themselves, staff members and students accountable for learning and academic achievement.
- Teachers are reflective of their practice, collaborative in their planning and caring of each of their students.
- Students are actively engaged in their learning, demonstrate good study skills and are quickly integrated into their new surroundings.
- Classrooms are print-rich with a focus on language acquisition.
- The school has implemented excellent attendance procedures.
- This is a clean and safe school that celebrates its success by publicly posting standard-setting work by its students.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue to invest in technology to support learning.
- Provide teachers with more opportunities for planning time during the school day.
- Continue to develop methodologies to individualize instruction and support.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well-developed school.

Newcomers High School meets the needs of its students very well. The dedicated leaders and staff work energetically to ensure students acquire English skills as quickly as possible, while also helping them to establish themselves successfully in the society of their new country. The school is a model of this type for other educational organizations that seek to better serve English language learners. English as a second language techniques are embedded in all content area subjects. In addition, the school pays particular attention to providing enrichment activities and hands on lessons that effectively engage students in their studies. Student suspensions are a very rare occurrence at this school where students feel they are being welcomed into a new society. Data is continuously used to drive planning, instruction and monitoring of progress. The school is exemplary in its use of quantitative and qualitative data to differentiate instruction for its diverse population and provide strong support systems.

How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.

This area of the school's work is well developed.

The school averages about 10 new admits a week from different countries. They are carefully screened and appropriately placed according to their ability in English, mathematics and other subject areas. The mathematics placement test is translated into numerous languages. The staff consistently collect and use data in a clear and systematic fashion. A very wide range of quantitative and qualitative data is imputed into a data bank of information to identify the strengths and areas for improvement of individual students and groups of students. Students and groups of students are then carefully followed throughout their time at the school to ensure that every opportunity is afforded them to accelerate their learning.

The progress of ethnic groups is followed particularly closely so as to identify strengths and areas of improvement that are common to them. The New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Tests, the Lab-R and the Spanish Lab test are reviewed regularly to identify needs. Many teachers are fluent in the languages of the largest numbers of newcomers such as Spanish and Chinese. The school constructs a baseline of information that contains the skill levels and social development issues for each student that allows for constant monitoring and evaluation. This information is crucial in order to make comparisons of performance and progress throughout the school year. Variations in performance in all subject areas are analyzed by administrators and teachers to identify patterns and trends.

The school compares itself very closely with other schools and with its past performance. In addition there are frequent comparisons made between classes, cohorts, grades and subject areas. Examining student work is of particular importance to the staff and is evidenced by the fact that standards meeting work is prominently posted in every

classroom and in hallways. There is a school wide expectation that every lesson should provide a positive outcome. There is clear evidence that the very effective systems of data collection have a positive impact on the performance and achievement of all students.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student’s next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student’s learning.

This area of the school’s work is well developed.

It is obvious that the school sets great store in developing its plans for instruction and interventions on the data accumulated on each student and groups of students. Teachers plan very effectively in teams and set measurable goals for interim and long term improvement. Goals and improvement plans efficiently focus on the school as a whole and then on each student, class, grade, content area and, most importantly, on groups of students. There is constant change and revision in response to data analysis. The school has a seminar class for all its students, for example. Topics which are addressed are partly determined by a review of data, such as students who need information about the college application process, those who will have difficulty writing the Roman alphabet and those who need extra help in a content area class.

The school works well to ensure that students in greatest need are helped to make progress. Following the analysis of data the school creates many classes that offer support to struggling students and is constantly seeking ways to accelerate learning. The school’s own self evaluation sets out its intention to interview struggling students to help individualize interventions. Strong academic intervention services are an embedded part of all subject area instruction. The school is well developed in how it scaffolds the learning of each student regardless of academic ability upon entering the school.

The school’s approach for every student is characterized by high expectations of good achievement in every lesson and subject area. Both students and parents can clearly articulate what each student needs to do to improve. All successes are widely celebrated and consistently used to raise expectations. The school has very good systems that fully involve students and parents in setting goals and targets to drive improvements in student outcomes. Parents, teachers and students take part in an annual review where they observe a wide range of classes and make recommendations for improvement. There is evidence that the wider school community participates and takes ownerships of the school’s vision, plans and goals.

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity and resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.

This area of the school’s work is well developed.

Mandated and selected curricula are creatively modified. Teachers develop comprehensive pacing calendars, curriculum maps and rubrics that are specific to meeting the needs of students. They look at student work to adjust the curriculum and their teaching methodologies. Assistant principals are active in analyzing data for their departments to identify how programs should be adjusted to reflect the changing needs of the students and motivating teachers to adapt the curriculum. All teachers are encouraged to learn language building strategies across the curriculum.

Each teacher and administrator can articulate how they are accountable for improving instruction. A project-based approach to lessons contributes to the broad collection of data and its use to generate meaningful interim data about progress. Teachers design their own examinations in teams to ensure that what is assessed is aligned with subject benchmarks and school goals. It is part of the normal expectations and practices within the school for all teachers to differentiate their instruction to respond to the specific needs revealed by data analysis. Every lesson is expected to contain an assessment on how effective the lesson was in engaging students and accelerating their learning. These lesson assessments are effective in improving the quality of instruction.

The school budget is used effectively to support staffing decisions. The school hires part-time teachers with strong specialties, college advisors and support service personnel. Teachers provide more academic intervention services outside their regular work day. A good amount of planning and curriculum writing takes place after school. The school has been investing in new technology to enhance classroom instruction since internet use enables staff and students to access large amounts of information, especially in other languages. One of the school's priorities is to use each student's language and culture to accelerate his or her learning. The school uses technology proficiently but recognizes the need to allocate more resources to support its goals and improve student outcomes.

Extra periods of English are scheduled for all students during the school day and during extended day activities. These activities are well attended and assist students to quickly gain fluency in their second language. There are excellent advanced placement classes offered to high achieving students that help them get acquainted with college and are offered in Spanish, French and Chinese. These classes are a great success in preparing students for their next level of education. Students are actively engaged in every class and demonstrate good rigor overall. They thrive on the multi-cultural experience. Much of the success of Newcomer High School is due to the strong bonds, mentoring and caring that the teachers demonstrate to their students, who feel valued and respected as a result. Every student's cultural heritage is valued and celebrated at every opportunity.

Positive strategies are in place throughout the school to encourage and reward good attendance. Attendance data is used at weekly meetings to give an early indication of a problem that can then be quickly addressed. As a result, student attendance is much higher than that in similar and City schools.

Quality Statement 4 - Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

This area of the school's work is well developed.

Staff are selected through a collaborative process that includes a committee of teachers and administrators. Candidates are hired on their ability to demonstrate a background in English as a second language, the capacity for working with English language learners and high expectations for student performance. They are also expected to show competence at planning by using data, making comparisons with periodic assessments and revising plans and methods based on needs revealed by the close examination of data. Professional development is successfully differentiated at all levels of the school. As an example, new teachers are assigned a 'buddy teacher' to meet with them for at least two hours a week and are required to attend weekly, intensive 'new teacher seminars'. The school is proactive in its planning of professional development ensuring that staff acquire the necessary skills to fully achieve school goals and targets. Staff

members are surveyed twice yearly regarding their professional development needs and assistant principals identify additional needs. Self and peer evaluation is regular, scheduled and well embedded into the whole school process.

The principal is well respected and has a conscientious strategy for improving the quality of her teachers. She makes formal observations and often visits classrooms on a daily basis. Her assistant principals are strong instructional leaders and are effective at holding students and teachers accountable for student progress by using observation outcomes to drive professional training decisions, identify and share good practice and monitor closely the impact on student progress. Processes are in place to ensure regular opportunities for teachers to plan collaboratively across grades and subjects and between grades and subjects. However, the opportunities to plan during the school day are limited. Many initiatives are effectively spearheaded by lead teachers. The school maintains a teacher center on-site that is popular and very effective at servicing the needs of teachers. Best instructional practices are often videotaped.

The school is safe, clean and cheery. Communications are clear and the school runs smoothly. There are very good partnerships, internships and working relationships with many, outside, community-based organizations that support language acquisition and introduce students to the culture of the American workplace. The school is particularly good at assisting students to gain college acceptance and financial aid.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerated learning.

This area of the school's work is well developed.

The school is very good at diagnosing the strengths and areas of improvement for its student population. Structures for evaluating progress include exit criteria for testing out of English as a second language services and frequent checkpoints during the academic school year to monitor student progress at meeting all goals. The school is also very effective at measuring and assessing the progress of school plans and interventions. Each at-risk pupil is assigned a 'mentor teacher' who follows his or her progress throughout the year and compares that progress to other students, classes and groups of students. The school leadership team meets on a monthly basis to review data, programs and offer their input for better meeting the needs of students. Student data is closely monitored and documented by teachers and administrators. The information generates a change in plans or programs if the data reveals a need to revise or change methods or interventions. Assessments are central to how the school realigns practices and resources to better meet the specific needs of students.

There is an annual review to assess goals regarding the environment and learning. Data bases are interrogated to see if interventions have been successful. The extensive range of data collected by the school is consistently used to evaluate progress and plan for the future. The systems and structures, and the collaborative and imaginative way in which they are used, is very well developed. The school is very accurate in its self evaluation. The school has proven to be skilled at building on its successes and is constantly seeking innovative ways to improve academic outcomes and the social development of its students.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Newcomers High School (HS 555)	∅	✓	+
Quality Score			X

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.	∅	✓	+
1.1 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • each student, classroom, grade level, 			X
1.2 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ethnic groups, English Language Learners, special education students* 			X
1.3 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all other categories of interest to the school* 			X
1.4 Performance and progress are measured based on comparisons with similar schools, with the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grade levels, academic subject areas, ethnic groups, and other groupings of interest within the school.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 1			X

* These criteria are partially aspirational as of now because schools do not have routine access to all of this data. The NYC DOE plans to provide schools with enhanced access to the necessary data in 2007.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student's next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student's learning.	∅	✓	+
2.1 Using data, school leaders and faculty engage in a collaborative process to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for immediate and long-range improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals.			X
2.2 Goals and plans focus on the school as a whole and on each student, classroom, grade level, academic subject, and group of students whose performance or progress has been identified by the school as a particular focus area.			X
2.3 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.			X
2.4 High expectations are conveyed to students and parents/caregivers. Students and their parents/caregivers are regularly invited to provide information about each student's performance and how to improve. This information is central to setting challenging goals and developing, evaluating, and revising plans.			X
2.5 Goals and plans for improving student performance and progress drive the activity of all members of the school community: leaders, staff, students, parents, and other partners.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 2			X

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity, resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.	∅	✓	+
3.1 The school selects the curriculum based on how well it aligns with or implements the mandated curriculum and on the curriculum's capacity to generate meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and to support the school's high expectations and improvement plans.			X
3.2 Teachers are accountable for improving instruction and student outcomes. They plan and differentiate their instruction based on the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.			X
3.3 Budgeting decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.		X	
3.4 Staffing decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.			X
3.5 Scheduling decisions about the use of teacher and student time are guided by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.		X	
3.6 Instructional programs actively engage students.			X
3.7 Staff know and respect students and respond to their academic needs, as well as their personal needs that affect academic performance. Each student knows and trusts an adult on the staff who is concerned about him or her.			X
3.8 Student attendance and engagement are high priorities. High rates and patterns of absences trigger immediate intervention.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 3			X
Quality Statement 4 – Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.	∅	✓	+
4.1 Leaders, faculty, and staff are selected based on their high expectations for student performance and progress and based on their commitment and capacity to use data, compare outcomes within and across classrooms and schools and develop and revise plans and methods to improve performance and progress.			X
4.2 Professional development decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes. Professional development is designed to help leaders, faculty, and staff use data, self- and peer-assessments, and collaboration with peers to achieve goals for improved school and student outcomes. Professional development and self- and peer-evaluation are aligned and overlap.			X
4.3 The principal frequently observes classroom teaching and has a considered strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction. Teachers frequently observe and support each other's classroom instruction with the goal of improving student outcomes.			X
4.4 Planning, evaluation of results, and revision of plans takes place in teams. Leaders and faculty inform each other of their goals and results, candidly evaluate themselves and each other, and use what is learned to drive improvement.			X
4.5 The principal is respected and has capacity to effect change.			X
4.6 The school runs smoothly. Procedures are clear, communicated to all, and are generally followed.			X
4.7 The school aligns youth development and support services around stated academic goals. Partnerships with outside bodies are routinely used to achieve academic goals.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 4			X
Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.	∅	✓	+
5.1 All school plans and other interventions include frequent interim goals and diagnostic assessments of progress designed to reveal in objectively measurable ways whether the plan is being effectively implemented and reaching stated goals.			X
5.2 Comparisons of student progress within and across classrooms and schools are used in making interim diagnostic assessments and measuring the progress of plans and interventions.			X
5.3 Information generated by periodic assessments and diagnostic measures of progress and comparisons is used to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals. Interim and final goals are modified when data objectively demonstrate that revision is required.			X
5.4 Each plan's interim and final outcomes drive successive phases of goal setting and improvement planning, and each successive phase is characterized by agile and flexible realignment of practices and resources to improve student academic outcomes.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 5			X